DEMAND X JAILS—CENTRAL PRISON.

MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): Sir, I beg to move for a grant not exceeding Rs. 3,000 under Demand X—Jails—Central Prison for the purchase of yarn for making jamkals for supply in connection with the ensuing Murajapam ceremony. The Murajapam ceremony is to be celebrated in the year 1105. About 3,186 jamkals are required for the purpose. A requisition was made to the Superintendent of the Central Prison for the supply of these jamkals. He has now written to say that he has no funds to purchase the yarn required for making jamkals. He says that a sum of Rs. 3,000 is necessary for purchasing yarn if the jamkals have to be supplied. Government have therefore come to this House for a grant of Rs. 3,000 for purchasing yarn.

MR. REVATI NAL RAMA VARMA RAJA (*Edavagai*): ഇതിനാവശ്യമുള്ള ജമുക്കാളം ടെൻഡർ കൊടുത്തു് കച്ചവടക്കാരിൽനിന്നും വാങ്ങിക്കുകയാണെങ്കിൽ ലാഭം വരുമോ നഷ്ടംവരുമോ എന്നു് നോക്കിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): Government think that this will be more cheap. This is only in the form of an advance and from the price paid for the jamkals, it will be returned to Government in the form of receipts from the Central Prison. If there is any profit, it will also go to Government.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum* cum *Neduvangad*): Do not the Government come into competition with private enterprise?

MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): It will only be giving work to the jail population and earning at the same time some profit to Government if this order is placed with the Central Prison.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum* cum *Neduvangad*): What is the number of convicts employed in weaving in the Central Prison?

MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): That information is not available.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum* cum *Neduvangad*): Does the learned Secretary tell me that at the time when the budget provision was made the full provision for employing the jail labour was not made?

MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): Yes.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum* cum *Neduvangad*): How is he going to get the work done now? Is he going to get additional population in the jail?

MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): This grant is only for purchasing yarn and the required labour may be found by diverting the activities of the convicts largely into this direction.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum* cum *Neduvangad*): You have got a certain number of prisoners in the Jail. How are you going to get this additional work done? Are you going to overwork the prisoners?

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MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): They may be doing some other sort of work. They may be asked to do weaving work when the jamkals are to be made?

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Neduvangad*): If you introduce industries for the purpose of making a profit, you are commercialising the work and thereby you come into conflict with private enterprise. You give work to the Central Prison merely to give more work to the prisoners.

MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): They are not given full work.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Neduvangad*): Do you mean to say they are underworked?

MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): No.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Neduvangad*): What is the provision for weaving in the Prison?

MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): The existing provision is more or less approximate for this purpose.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Neduvangad*): Sir, I think I shall oppose this demand not on the merits alone but on other grounds as well. There is a ruling from the Chair that discussions relating to departmental policies are not admissible on supplementary demands. This ruling has been followed in the Madras Council as well. I do not question the wisdom of the ruling. All of us are aware of it. Though we have got a non-official majority in this Council all that we can achieve here is sometimes to score a victory or at other times we may inflict a defeat upon the Government. But these defeats cannot affect the Government in any way. What we therefore most price in this Council and what really affects the Government is the power of discussion. If there is a policy, a departmental policy, underlying the discussion, the ruling of the Chair comes in to stifle the discussion. So heads of departments should bear in mind this ruling in bringing supplementary demands so that we may avoid a discussion of departmental policies. In this case there is the question whether Government would enter into competition. I understand that industries are being carried on by private people. The essential object of introducing weaving in the prison is to teach the prisoners some industry by which they can maintain themselves after going out of the prison, and by employing them and reforming them the Government expect to achieve their ends. That is the primary object. Now for the year 1104 all the available prisoners have been found employment for.

MR. S. PIRAVIPERUMAL PILLAI (*Commerce and Industry, South*): May I know whether the number of prisoners has not increased later on?

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Neduvangad*): I do not know. It has not been increased. So, the *Murajapam* ceremony is coming on and perhaps the Jail authorities alone can find some work or make profit out of that. It is here I say that the Government ought not to come in conflict with private enterprise. If Mr. Krishna

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Pillai's contention is that prisoners are underworked, I deny that. I know they are not underworked. If he is going to overwork them, I object to it. For a certain amount of labour a certain amount of food is given. You cannot overwork them. For these reasons, I oppose the demand.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): Sir, my friend Mr. Madhavan Pillai has raised an important point of principle when we are discussing this small grant. I may assure the House that this grant is demanded with the sole object of getting to the tax-payer himself the profit on an operation which would otherwise go to a contractor if the work is given on contract.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Neduvangad*): Is not the contractor also a tax-payer?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): But he is a single tax-payer.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Neduvangad*): Do you admit the principle?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): No question of new principle arises here. Mr. Madhavan Pillai was saying that when you fix the grant for purchase of yarn for the year, you are fully aware of the whole work that the convicts have to do. No such thing. It is only an approximate estimate. An examination of the budgets of the several years would disclose the fact that we have no definite data before us as to the extent of the work that the jail convicts would do in the course of the year. I say no new principle is involved in this, because the principle of giving some work to the prisoners is accepted. The Government Press is a commercial department; the Forest is a commercial department. You cannot avoid some competition with private enterprise. The question is only whether we are going to use our money in the interests of the tax-payers. If this demand is refused, the only course is for the Government to go to the contractor and that they could do without coming to the council for additional funds because *Murajapam* is an item which this Council has no cognizance of. The idea of the Government was that if there was any profit in the transaction, it should accrue to the Government to the benefit of the general tax-payer.

MR. A. THANU PILLAI (*Trivandrum*): What will be the extent of the profit?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): We do not know. We do not know what will be the rates for the yarn to be purchased. Another thing I would say is that the general opinion is that the articles made in the Central Prison are superior and last longer. So, I would request the House to allow this grant.

MR. K. MADHAVAN PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Neduvangad*): I withdraw my opposition.

The motion was put and the demand was granted.

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